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The Social Ecology of Murder In Indiana



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Guided by a Board of Trustees representing all components of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute serves as Indiana's planning agency for criminal justice, juvenile justice, traffic safety, and victim services. The Institute collaborates with state and local organizations, conducts research, and develops strategic plans for the allocation of justice funds to help create safer communities, effectively address the rehabilitation of delinquent and criminal offenders, and assist victims of crime. Funds from the United States Department of Justice help the Institute put plans into practice throughout Indiana.

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FORWARD

In 1983 Cleon Foust, former Attorney General of Indiana and Dean of Indiana University's School of Law—Indianapolis, and a group of forward thinking criminal justice planners created the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute to give justice researchers and practitioners the opportunity to come together to develop significant research initiatives that were relevant and of value to practitioners.

In one of the most comprehensive studies of murder sentencing conducted in the United States, Mary Ziemba-Davis, the Institute's Deputy Director for Research and Planning, and her research partners studied the detailed records of offenders convicted of murder in Indiana from 1977 through 2002. *The Social Ecology of Murder in Indiana* examines characteristics of those who have murdered, those who have been victims of murder, and the locations of and reasons for murder in Indiana.

This important work provides insights to help policymakers understand the factors and circumstances that lead to murder. The work is worthy of the high standards set by those forward thinkers. Dean Foust would be pleased.

Catherine O'Connor
December 2004

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Recent advances in DNA testing combined with several high profile media stories about individuals wrongly convicted of murder, sentenced to death, and later exonerated, have led many policymakers to question whether adequate safeguards are in place to protect against serious miscarriages of justice in their states. Several states (e.g., Illinois, Maryland, Nebraska, North Carolina, Texas) have undertaken reviews of their capital sentencing statutes and procedures. The importance of this justice issue was not lost on Indiana lawmakers. In 2001, at the request of Governor Frank O'Bannon, the Indiana Criminal Law Study Commission (CLSC)¹ began reviewing the application of Indiana's capital sentencing law.

Phase 1 - The Initial Findings Study: 'Sentencing Outcomes for Murder in Indiana'

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (the Institute) staffs Indiana's CLSC. During the first phase of Indiana's capital sentencing review, the Institute's charge was to assist the CLSC by studying six key issues: procedural safeguards, quality of counsel, appellate review, race neutrality, cost, and statutory changes. Indiana's final report, *The Application of Indiana's Capital Sentencing Law: Findings of the Indiana Criminal Law Study Commission*, was issued by the Institute in January, 2002 (Janeway, 2002). A chapter in the report '*Sentencing Outcomes for Murder in Indiana*' included a preliminary, descriptive (i.e., non-predictive) assessment of sentencing outcomes for individuals convicted of murder in Indiana. *Sentencing Outcomes for Murder in Indiana* was specifically designed to examine the issue of whether capital sentences are imposed in a race-neutral manner. The focus of that initial findings report was 224 offenders who were convicted and sentenced for murders committed between July 1, 1993 and August 10, 2001. One-hundred and fifty-six (69.6%) received a determinate sentence, 58 (25.9%) received life without parole, and 10 (4.5%) received the death penalty. Initial findings indicated:

- The majority of murders in Indiana since July 1, 1993 (when life with the possibility of parole first became an option in the state) have been intraracial. Thus, in general, it appears that White offenders tend to murder White victims and Non-White offenders tend to murder Non-White victims;
- Ten murderers who committed their crimes on or after July 1, 1993 were sentenced to death;
- Since July 1, 1993, White offenders have received more severe sentences for murder than Non-White offenders; and
- Although sentencing outcomes for murders committed since July 1, 1993 appear to be less severe for Non-White offenders than for White offenders, this observation may have more to do with the victim's race than with the offender's race. When the victim is White, White offenders and Non-White offenders appear to be sentenced similarly, but when the victim is Non-White, Non-White offenders appear to be sentenced less severely than White offenders (Ziemba-Davis, Myers, & Lisby, 2002).

¹ Indiana's Criminal Law Study Commission, established by Executive Order, has as its major purpose to study and propose revisions in criminal procedure and to monitor Indiana's Criminal Code, Juvenile Code, and Corrections Code and to draft recommendations for legislative or court approval which would insure just and efficient operation of the criminal justice system.

Phase 2 – The Current Study: ‘Indiana’s Murder Sentencing Study’

With the support of Governor O’Bannon’s, and later, Governor Kernan’s administrations, the Institute launched *Indiana’s Murder Sentencing Study* to continue the work started in *Sentencing Outcomes for Murder in Indiana*. This second phase of research was intended to provide a more comprehensive review of murder sentencing outcomes by focusing on a larger target population and examining additional case facts.

Indiana’s Murder Sentencing Study represents the first, comprehensive, predictive study of sentences received for murder in Indiana. The research team collected data for all individuals who were given death sentences since Indiana reinstated the death penalty in 1977, all individuals sentenced to life in prison without parole since this option was added to the criminal code in 1993, and a random sample of individuals who committed murder and were sentenced to determinate, fixed-terms of incarceration between July 1, 1990 and December 31, 2002. The current study’s design allowed for the examination of more than 200 legal (e.g., manner of homicide and number of victims) and extralegal variables (e.g., race of offender and race of victim) to predict who gets what type of sentence for murder in Indiana (i.e., a death sentence vs. life in prison without the possibility of parole vs. a determinate sentence), and why. Study findings will be disseminated via a series of publications that will be shared with the Governor, the Criminal Law Study Commission, Sentencing Policy Study Committee,² other interested policymakers, and criminal justice practitioners.

The following report, *The Social Ecology of Murder in Indiana*, is the first in a series of reports focusing on a public safety concern of interest to all of the citizenry of Indiana—murder. Before complicated multivariate statistical analyses are published (which will help public officials more fully understand the factors that influence sentencing practices), it is imperative to first provide an in-depth description of the study population, their victims, and the contexts in which the murders occurred. To the best of our knowledge, *The Social Ecology of Murder in Indiana* is the first time any attempt has been made to explain the who, where, how, and why of murder in our state.

² Indiana’s Sentencing Policy Study Committing was legislatively established in 2003 to evaluate the existing classification of criminal offenses into felony and misdemeanor categories, to recommend structures to be used by a sentencing court in determining the most appropriate sentence to be imposed in a criminal case, to review community corrections and home detention programs, to determine the long range needs of the criminal justice and corrections systems and recommend policy priorities for those systems, to identify critical problems in the criminal justice and corrections systems and to recommend strategies to solve the problems, to assess the cost effectiveness of the use of state and local funds in the criminal justice and corrections systems, to recommend a comprehensive community corrections strategy, to propose plans, programs, and legislation for improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice and corrections systems, and to evaluate the use of faith based organizations as an alternative to incarceration.

SECTION 2: STUDY METHOD

Sample

Indiana's revised death penalty statute has been available as a sentencing option for murder since October 1, 1977 when Indiana amended its capital sentencing statute pursuant to the United State's Supreme Court's ruling in *Furman v. Georgia* (408 U.S. 238 (1972)).³ While determinate sentences or 'fixed-terms of incarceration' for murder also have been an option since 1977, life without the possibility of parole did not become a sentencing option for murder in Indiana until July 1, 1993.

As shown in Table 1, individuals who received a death sentence, life without parole, or a determinate sentence for murders committed between specified dates and December 31, 2002 (the cut-off date for inclusion in the study) are the focus of the current study. Persons convicted of attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, or aiding in the cause of murder were not included in the study population.

Table 1: Subjects by Sentence Type

Sentence Type	Number of Subjects	Notes
Death Penalty	91	The population includes 91 offenders who committed murders and were sentenced to death between July 1, 1977 and December 31, 2002. ^{a, b}
Life Without Parole	73	The population includes 73 offenders who committed murders and were sentenced to life without parole between July 1, 1993 and December 31, 2002. ^a
Determinate	298	A random sample of the 1,326 offenders who committed murders and received determinate sentence between January 1, 1990 and December 31, 2002. ^a
<i>Total</i>	<i>462</i>	
^a These categories do not represent final case outcomes, rather include original sentences rendered even if a death or life sentence was subsequently overturned.		
^b One offender is counted twice because he received two death sentences in different counties for different murders within the study time period.		

The Offender Information System (OIS) maintained by the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) was used to identify individuals convicted of murder in Indiana. All offenders who received a death sentence and all offenders who received life without parole within the time periods specified in Table 1 were identified in OIS and confirmed by secondary sources. Random sampling was used to select a representative subset of the 1,326 offenders who received a determinate sentence for murders committed between January 1, 1990 and December 31, 2002.⁴ Before a random sample of offenders with determinate sentences for

³ The U.S. Supreme Court's decision forced state and federal legislatures to revise capital statutes to insure that the death penalty would not be administered in a capricious or arbitrary manner.

⁴ (a) Stratifying by offense year or sentence year was not necessary when drawing the determinate sample because all offenders who committed murder since January 1, 1990 were still represented in the

murder could be drawn, *all* offenders who had received this sentence since January 1, 1990 had to be identified to control for possible sources of bias (such as differences in sentence lengths given out over time). The random sample of determinate offenders was selected from all offenders so sentenced since January 1, 1990 since IDOC records were not computerized until 1989. The lack of computerized records for offenders prior to this time made it impossible to sample from the larger population of people who have received a determinate sentence for murders committed since October 1, 1977 (the earliest date for which death penalty offenders in this study could be identified).

Whenever a subset of people is sampled from a larger group or population of people, the key question is: "Is the sample representative of the entire population from which it was drawn?" A sampling strategy which permits the conclusion that 95 out of 100 times a result will be representative of all determinate offenders from which the sample was drawn, plus or minus 5%, was selected for this study. Thus, a finding that 30% of determinate offenders *in our sample* had a known mental health problem prior to the instant offense statistically means that with 95% certainty the true population value for *all* determinate offenders (including those not in the study sample) may range from 25% to 35%.

It is important to note that findings for offenders who received a death sentence or life without parole reflect the true or 'real' population value because *all* offenders in these two groups who were convicted of murders committed between October 1, 1977 (in the case of death penalty offenders) or July 1, 1993 (in the case of life without parole offenders) and December 31, 2002 were included in the study. For example, a finding that 58% of life without parole offenders had never been married prior to the instant offense does not have to be interpreted in the context of a range of possible true population values. Stated another way, a finding that 52% of death penalty offenders had been emotionally abused by their caregivers while growing up means just that—52% of all offenders who received a death sentence had been emotionally abused.

Measures

Indiana's Murder Sentencing Study was designed to examine a large number of legal and extralegal factors from cases resulting in murder convictions to permit in-depth analyses of many different aspects of homicide ranging from the social ecology of murder (as presented in this paper) to predictors of sentences received for murder in our state (see the Summary section of this report for analyses planned and/or underway). In total, hundreds of variables recovered from 14 different source documents (maintained by several different agencies and organizations) were retrieved and coded for 462 offenders and their 544 victims. Specifics about the quantity and quality of information obtained will be presented in a process paper on the data collection effort itself; summary information is provided below.

Types of variables. Study variables can be categorized in one of four principal groups. Examples of key study variables are listed for each group below⁵.

1. Facts about Offenders (e.g., sex; race; age at the time of the crime; place of birth; socioeconomic background; family upbringing/home life; education level;

prison population when the sample was drawn. (b) In addition to drawing the basic random sample of 298 determinately sentenced offenders for whom findings are presented in this report, a second random sample of determinate offenders stratified by race was drawn. In this way, a group representative of all *White* offenders with a determinate sentence and a group representative of all *Non-White* offenders with a determinate sentence were obtained. Findings based on the additional random samples stratified by race are not presented in this report but will be presented in future reports examining the relationship between murder and race.

⁵ Variables from group four are not examined in this report.

indicators of physical, mental, and emotional health, including alcohol and drug abuse; and criminal history),

2. Facts about Victims (e.g., sex, age, race, and relationship to the offender),
3. Facts about the Crime (e.g., the method of murder and the motive for the murder), and
4. Facts about Trial, Conviction, and Sentencing (e.g., the nature and number of aggravating and mitigating circumstances; jury recommendations regarding sentencing; and the sentence received).

Source of variables. When available, 14 primary types of records as listed below were gathered for each offender. The most complete information was available for death penalty offenders, followed by those sentenced to life without parole. In general, a paucity of information could be retrieved for offenders who were given a fixed-term.

1. Arrest reports
2. Affidavits of probable cause
3. Original and amended informations (i.e., charging instruments)
4. Plea agreements
5. Evaluations of competency to stand trial
6. Jury/court verdicts
7. Abstracts of judgment
8. Presentence investigation reports
9. Jury sentencing recommendations
10. Sentencing orders (and sentencing hearing transcripts)
11. Commitments to IDOC
12. Psychological evaluation reports
13. Diagnostic and classification reports completed upon intake to IDOC
14. Miscellaneous records (appeals, clemency reports, newspaper accounts, etc.)

Procedure

Retrieval of offender records required a multi-tiered approach because no one agency or organization in Indiana maintained all of the records required for this study. Data collection began at the Indiana Department of Correction because this agency conferred the potential advantage of collecting reasonably comprehensive information from a single source. Hard copy IDOC offender packets were reviewed for all cases targeted for inclusion and copies of pertinent documents were made. (Some offender-level information also was obtained electronically from OIS.) Records were tracked in a Microsoft Access database to permit identification of missing records for each offender.

The second tier of data collection involved locating and retrieving missing records from several alternative sources. The Clerk of the Supreme, Appeals, and Tax Court; Attorney General's Office; and Office of the Public Defender were systematically searched for all records missing for individuals who received the death penalty or life without parole (few, if any, records for determinate offenders are maintained by these agencies). In one instance the Indiana Public

Defender Council and the Office of the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney were contacted for death penalty case records.

The third tier of offender data collection involved field visits to local Indiana trial courts and county Clerk of the Court's Offices. These offices were particularly helpful for retrieval of records for individuals sentenced to a determinate, fixed-term of incarceration.

Information for victims of murder was obtained via death certificates maintained by the Indiana State Department of Health and supplemental sources such as affidavits of probable cause.

Data Entry and Analysis

The specific variables to be coded from the records obtained were conceptualized and operationally defined by the research team to reflect and potentially replicate previous murder research. Data were entered in a Microsoft Access database by members of the research team, additional members of the Institute's research staff, and university students familiar with or specifically trained in social science research methods. The level of complexity of data to be coded determined the assignment of specific data entry tasks.

The authors managed data entry, verification, and analysis. Data were exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. Univariate descriptive findings from the study are presented here.

SECTION 3: WHO COMMITS MURDER IN INDIANA?

Table 3-1: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Sex, Race & Age

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offender Sex						
Male	285	72	87	95.6	98.6	95.6
Female	13	1	4	4.4	1.4	4.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Offender Race / Ethnicity						
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	1	0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Black/African American	149	23	30	50.0	31.5	33.0
Hispanic	5	3	2	1.7	4.1	2.2
White/Caucasian	144	46	59	48.3	63.0	64.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Offender Age at Offense (in years)						
Mean	26.8	27.2	27.1			
Standard Deviation	9.0	8.6	8.0			
Range	14-57	16-55	15-49			

Source of Data: Information presented was self-reported upon intake to the Indiana Department of Correction.

Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68% of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 26.8 and the standard deviation is 9, for 68% of all cases, the age at offense is between 17.8 and 35.8 years.

Just over 96% of the total study sample is made up of male offenders. While the same proportion of females are in the determinate as death penalty categories, examination of the number of women by sentence type show that most women who kill in Indiana receive determinate sentences. Interestingly, the same is true for men—the proportion of male determinate offenders was identical to proportion of male death penalty offenders, but the number of men in each category demonstrate that the vast majority of men who kill in Indiana receive determinate sentences.

Very little racial or ethnic diversity existed in the sample. Almost 98% of the sample was Caucasian or African American. The proportion of Caucasian offenders is far greater than that of African Americans in the life with parole and death penalty categories; however, African Americans are still greatly over represented in all three categories based on their representation in the general population. It is important to note, however, that a predictive study is required to determine the role of offender race, if any, in sentencing practices for murder.

There was also little variation in offender average age across the three groups. Offenders' age at the time of the instant offense ranged from 14-57, with an average age of 27.

Table 3-2: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Offender Upbringing

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Who Raised the Offender?						
Both biological parents/biological parent and step parent	240	65	84	80.5	89.0	92.3
Single biological parent/single step parent	183	36	51	61.4	49.3	56.0
Grandparent(s), sibling(s), aunt(s), uncle(s), cousin(s) or other related relative(s)	60	15	20	20.1	20.5	22.0
Foster home, adopted parent(s), or guardian home children's home, group home, etc.	24	8	15	8.1	11.0	16.5
Friends/family friends/mother's girlfriend, mother's boyfriend, father's girlfriend, father's boyfriend	10	1	7	3.4	1.4	7.7
Other	5	0	3	1.7	0.0	3.3
Don't know	4	2	1	1.3	2.7	1.1
Number of offenders raised by someone other than or in addition to both biological parents at some point in their upbringing	220	51	62	73.8	69.9	68.1
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Data in Table 3-2 reflect all of the conditions under which offenders were raised during their childhood. For any given offender, it is possible that he or she had for a time been raised under two or more of these circumstances (e.g., being raised by both biological parents and then subsequently being placed in a foster care home).

The vast majority of determinate, life without parole, and death penalty offenders in this study had been raised at some point in their life by both biological parents or by one biological parent and a step parent. A substantial proportion of offenders in each group also had experienced being raised by a single parent, and one-fifth of offenders had, for some time period, been raised by an extended family member such as a grandparent, sibling, or an aunt. Substantially more death penalty offenders had spent time in the foster care system or in the custody of family friends than offenders in either of the other two groups.

Table 3-3: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Caregivers' History of Abuse and Crime

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Caregivers						
History of Alcohol Abuse	92	41	43	30.9	56.2	47.3
History of Drug Abuse	28	13	11	9.4	17.8	12.1
Physically Abused the Defendant (whether or not the abuse was substantiated)	72	31	44	24.2	42.5	48.4
Emotionally Abused the Defendant (whether or not the abuse was substantiated)	67	26	47	22.5	35.6	51.6
Sexually Abused the Defendant (whether or not the abuse was substantiated)	11	6	11	3.7	8.2	12.1
History of Crime (i.e., arrest and/or conviction)	46	17	17	15.4	23.3	18.7
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Thirty-eight percent of all offenders in the study had a caregiver who had a history of alcohol abuse; 11% had caregivers who had abused drugs; and 17% had caregivers who had been arrested and/or convicted for a crime. While not uncommon among determinate and death penalty offenders, all three of these circumstances were most characteristic of study offenders who had received life without parole.

One third of all offenders had been physically abused by a caregiver and one-third had been emotionally abused. Sexual abuse was noted for about six percent of offenders. Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse was the most prevalent among death penalty offenders, followed by those sentenced to life without parole. In fact, one in two death penalty offenders had been physically or emotionally abused.

Table 3-4: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Education

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offender Highest Education Level Completed Prior to Instant Offense						
Less Than 9 th Grade	37	7	15	12.4	9.6	16.5
9 th -12 th Grade Without High School Diploma or GED	110	19	25	36.9	26.0	27.5
High School Diploma or GED	101	32	40	33.9	43.8	44.0
Advanced Study	48	13	9	16.1	17.8	9.9
Don't Know	2	2	2	0.7	2.7	2.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Offenders with Known Suspensions and/or Expulsions from School	119	33	30	39.9	45.2	33.0
Of the Offenders with Known Suspensions and/or Expulsions, the Number Quitting School Because of Suspensions and/or Expulsions	42	10	11	35.3	30.0	36.7
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Slightly more than half of all offenders in the study had earned at least a high school diploma or GED at the time of their offense (50% of determinate, 61.6% of life without parole, and 53.9% of death penalty offenders). Fifty-nine offenders (12.8%) had not completed more than the 8th grade, while approximately 15% of study offenders had some type of advanced education (though death penalty offenders were least likely to have achieved this benchmark).

Nearly 40% of all offenders were known to have been suspended or expelled from school, with slightly more life without parole offenders having been expelled. Clearly, suspensions and expulsions can have a major impact on a young person's life as demonstrated by the fact that approximately one-third of all offenders with known suspensions/expulsions quit school as a result of them.

Table 3-5: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Religion

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offender Religious Preference / Affiliation Prior to Instant Offense						
Atheist	1	1	1	0.3	1.4	1.1
Baptist	66	11	10	22.1	15.1	11.0
Buddhist	0	1	0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Greek Orthodox	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Islamic/Muslim	3	0	0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Jewish	2	1	0	0.7	1.4	0.0
Lutheran	2	1	0	0.7	1.4	0.0
Methodist	7	0	3	2.3	0.0	3.3
Mormon (Latter Day Saints)	0	1	1	0.0	1.4	1.1
Native American religion	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1.1
Other Christian	77	26	13	25.8	35.6	14.3
Other Protestant	12	2	5	4.0	2.7	5.5
Presbyterian	1	0	1	0.3	0.0	1.1
Roman Catholic	20	5	11	6.7	6.8	12.1
Satanism/Devil Worship	2	1	2	0.7	1.4	2.2
Other	2	0	3	0.7	0.0	3.3
No Religion	72	20	17	24.2	27.4	18.7
Don't know	30	3	23	10.1	4.1	25.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Many offenders (23.6%) in the study indicated they had no religious preference/ affiliation. Approximately 25% of offenders expressed preference/affiliation with “Other Christian,” 18.8% identified themselves as “Baptist”, and roughly eight percent were “Roman Catholic”. No other religion accounted for more than four percent of offenders in the study.

Table 3-6: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Employment & Military Experience

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Employment Prior to Instant Offense						
Number of Offenders Employed	109	35	34	36.6	47.9	37.4
Employed Offenders Who Were:						
Full-Time	19	6	3	17.4	17.1	8.8
Part-Time	11	0	1	10.1	0.0	2.9
Don't Know	79	29	30	72.5	82.9	88.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Military Experience Prior to Instant Offense						
Honorably Discharged	28	6	17	9.4	8.2	18.7
Not Honorably Discharged	9	3	3	3.0	4.1	3.3
Unknown Military Discharge Status	0	1	3	0.0	1.4	3.3
Other (e.g. Cuban Military)	1	1	2	0.3	1.4	2.2
No Military Experience	232	58	56	77.9	79.5	61.5
Don't know	28	4	10	9.4	5.5	11.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
If Offenders Had Military Experience, Did They Have Combat Experience?	5	2	4	13.5	20.0	17.4
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Approximately 39% of offenders were employed prior to (i.e., at the time of) their instant offense, with slightly more life without parole offenders employed than any other group. Information regarding the extent of employment was limited but 16% of all offenders reported that they were employed full-time.

Overall, relatively few offenders across the three groups had served in the military. Death penalty offenders were, however, far more likely to have served in the military in some capacity (27.5% compared to 15.1% for life without parole and 12.8% for determinate offenders).

Table 3-7: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Marital Status

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offenders Marital Status Prior to Instant Offense						
Married	33	17	21	11.1	23.3	23.1
Separated	22	6	5	7.4	8.2	5.5
Divorced	36	8	11	12.1	11.0	12.1
Widowed	2	0	0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Never Married	203	42	50	68.1	57.5	54.9
Other	1	0	1	0.3	0.0	1.1
Don't Know	1	0	3	0.3	0.0	3.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.

Fifteen percent of offenders reported being married at the time of their instant offense. Nearly a quarter of death penalty and life without parole offenders reported being married, compared to just 11% of determinate offenders. More than two-thirds of all offenders reported having *never* been married.

Though not presented in the table, researchers also coded whether there was any indication in the files that non-married offenders were in a significant relationship prior to the instant offense. Fifty-five percent of the entire study sample was either married or in a significant relationship when they committed their murder.

Table 3-8: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Parenting

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offenders Parental Status Prior to Instant Offense						
Not a Parent	120	37	39	40.3	50.7	42.9
Parent	173	36	43	58.1	49.3	47.3
Don't Know	5	0	9	1.7	0.0	9.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
If Offender Were Parents, Did They Have Contact With Their Children?						
At Least Some Contact	106	22	23	61.3	61.1	53.5
No Contact	14	3	3	8.1	8.3	7.0
Don't Know	53	11	17	30.6	30.6	39.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.

Over half of all offenders were parents at the time of the instant offense and 60% percent of these were known to have at least some contact with their children. Determinate offenders were more likely to be parents (58.1%) than either life without parole offenders (49.3%) or death penalty offenders (47.3%).

Table 3-9: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Mental Health & Suicide Attempts

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Mental Health Problems Prior to Instant Offense						
Yes	89	26	33	29.9	35.6	36.3
No	204	44	53	68.5	60.3	58.2
Don't Know	5	3	5	1.7	4.1	5.5
<i>Total</i>	298	73	91	100.0	100.0	100.0
Attempted Suicide Prior to Instant Offense						
Yes	54	19	19	18.1	26.0	20.9
No	173	38	13	58.1	52.1	14.3
Don't Know	71	16	59	23.8	21.9	64.8
<i>Total</i>	298	73	91	100.0	100.0	100.0
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports, intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction, and clinical/psychiatric assessments (both court ordered or otherwise).						

Mental health problems were slightly more prevalent among life without parole (35.6%) and death penalty offenders (36.3%) offenders than what was seen with determinate offenders (29.9%). One-fifth of offenders in the study had attempted suicide at some time before the instant offense occurred. Suicide attempts appeared to be somewhat more common among life without parole offenders, but this may be an artifact because information about suicide attempts was not available for two-thirds of all death penalty offenders.

Table 3-10: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Alcohol Abuse

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Alcohol Use, Abuse, and Treatment Prior to Instant Offense						
How Many Offenders Have Ever Used Alcohol?	285	70	78	95.6	95.9	85.7
If the Offender Has Ever Used Alcohol, at What Age Did the Offender First Try Alcohol?						
9 or Younger	15	3	3	5.3	4.3	3.8
10 to 14	74	18	18	26.0	25.7	23.1
15 to 17	65	17	8	22.8	24.3	10.3
18 to 20	19	4	2	6.7	5.7	2.6
21 or Older	4	1	1	1.4	1.4	1.3
Don't Know	108	27	46	37.9	38.6	59.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Average Age at First Use						
Mean	14.2	14.1	13.6			
Standard Deviation	3.4	3.3	3.6			
Range	4-25	4-21	5-25			
If the Offender Has Ever Used Alcohol, Did the Offender Have a History of Alcohol Abuse?						
Yes	168	49	53	58.8	70.0	67.9
Of the Offenders Identified as Having a History of Alcohol Abuse, How Many Received Treatment?						
Yes	75	16	14	38.3	29.6	25.0
No	106	30	22	54.1	55.6	39.3
Don't Know	15	8	20	7.7	14.8	35.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports, intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction, and clinical/psychiatric assessments (both court ordered or otherwise).						
Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68% of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 14.2 and the standard deviation is 3.4, for 68% of all cases, the age at offense is between 10.8 and 17.6 years.						

See table summary on page 23.

Table 3-11: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Drug Abuse

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Drug Use, Abuse, and Treatment Prior to Instant Offense						
How Many Offenders Have Ever Used Drugs?	234	65	74	78.5	89.0	81.3
If the Offender Has Ever Used Drugs, at What Age Did the Offender First Try Drugs?						
9 or Younger	4	9	3	1.7	13.8	4.1
10 to 14	63	22	22	26.9	33.8	29.7
15 to 17	53	12	6	22.6	18.5	8.1
18 to 20	20	3	3	8.5	4.6	4.1
21 or Older	7	0	3	3.0	0.0	4.1
Don't Know	87	19	37	37.2	29.2	50.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Average Age at First Use						
Mean	14.9	13.1	14.1			
Standard Deviation	3.3	3.2	4.4			
Range	6-25	7-20	7-30			
If the Offender Has Ever Used Drugs, Did the Offender Have a History of Drug Abuse?						
Yes	166	61	64	70.9	93.8	86.5
Of the Offenders Identified as Having a History of Drug Abuse, How Many Received Treatment?						
Yes	67	18	9	34.0	28.1	13.2
No	111	37	32	56.3	57.8	47.1
Don't Know	19	9	27	9.6	14.1	39.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports, intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction, and clinical/psychiatric assessments (both court ordered or otherwise).

Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68% of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 14.9 and the standard deviation is 3.3, for 68% of all cases, the age at offense is between 14.5 and 18.2 years.

See table summary on page 23.

Table 3-10: Ninety-four percent of offenders reported using alcohol, though proportionally more life without parole and determinate offenders used alcohol at some point in their lives prior to the instant offense. Average age at first use was very similar across sentencing categories, but death penalty offenders seem to have begun using alcohol a bit earlier in their lives.

Approximately two-thirds of all offenders were believed to have had a history of alcohol abuse prior to the instant offense; however, alcohol abuse seems to have been more prevalent among life without parole and death penalty offenders. Interestingly, of all the offenders who were thought to have alcohol abuse problems only one-third received some type of treatment.

Table 3-11: Eighty-one percent of all study offenders reported using drugs at some point in their lives. Proportionally more life without parole offenders had used drugs than death penalty-or determinate offenders. However, both death penalty and life without parole offenders were at least a year younger than determinate offenders when they first tried drugs.

Seventy-eight percent of offenders who used drugs were believed to have had a history of drug abuse prior to the instant offense; however, drug abuse (like alcohol abuse) seems to have been more common among life without parole and death penalty offenders. Again, as was the case with treatment for alcohol, only about one-third of defendants thought to have drug abuse problems received some type of treatment.

Table 3-12: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Drug of Choice						
	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Drug of Choice -- Excluding Alcohol						
Club Drugs	3	1	0	1.0	1.4	0.0
Cocaine	66	14	15	22.1	19.2	16.5
Depressants	7	1	1	2.3	1.4	1.1
Inhalants	3	3	1	1.0	4.1	1.1
Hallucinogens	8	7	8	2.7	9.6	8.8
Marijuana/Hashish	193	59	53	64.8	80.8	58.2
Opiates/Narcotics	8	2	6	2.7	2.7	6.6
Stimulants	17	9	11	5.7	12.3	12.1
Other	3	2	3	1.0	2.7	3.3
Don't Know	86	10	26	28.9	13.7	28.6
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports, intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction, and clinical/psychiatric assessments (both court ordered or otherwise).						

While some offenders had more than one drug of choice (and thus may be counted in more than one drug category), the overwhelming drug of choice among offenders in this study was Marijuana/Hashish. Cocaine was considered a drug of choice by one-fifth of study participants.

Table 3-13: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Arrests

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Did Offender Have A Criminal History Prior to Instant Offense?						
Yes	276	67	85	92.6	91.8	93.4
No	22	6	5	7.4	8.2	5.5
Don't Know	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Of the Offenders With A Criminal History, How Many had at Least One...						
Juvenile Arrest	149	43	56	54.0	64.2	65.9
Adult Arrest	245	57	71	88.8	85.1	83.5
Military Arrest	6	2	1	2.2	3.0	1.2
Average Number of Arrests						
Mean	7.9	8.2	8.4			
Standard Deviation	6.8	7.8	7.7			
Range	1-43	1-46	1-36			
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						
Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68% of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 7.9 and the standard deviation is 6.8, for 68% of all cases, the age at offense is between 1.1 and 14.7 arrests.						

Ninety-two percent of offenders in each sentence type group had a criminal history prior to the committing the instant offense. Most (84% or more) had been arrested at least once as an adult. More than half had been arrested as a juvenile. The highest proportion of juvenile arrests was seen among death penalty offenders, followed by life without parole and then determinate offenders. The opposite trend is true of adult arrests, the highest proportion of adult arrests were found among determinate offenders, followed by life without parole and death penalty offenders.

The average number of juvenile and adult arrests combined did not differ significantly by sentence type group. On average, offenders in each group had been arrested about eight times, some with only one arrest and others with as many as 43 arrests.

Table 3-14: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Types of Arrests

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offenders Who Had At Least One Arrest for the Following:						
Alcohol and Tobacco Crimes/Infractions	86	14	29	28.9	19.2	31.9
Controlled Substances	97	20	16	32.6	27.4	17.6
Juvenile Law: Delinquency	91	19	24	30.5	26.0	26.4
Offenses Against Property	210	57	66	70.5	78.1	72.5
Offenses Against Public Administration	109	27	33	36.6	37.0	36.3
Offenses Against Public Health, Order, and Decency	94	22	29	31.5	30.1	31.9
Offenses Against the Person	177	44	66	59.4	60.3	72.5
Vehicle/Driving Offenses - Alcohol	60	11	11	20.1	15.1	12.1
Weapon Offenses	78	25	23	26.2	34.2	25.3
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports.						

This table presents the number and proportion of offenders who had been arrested at least once for one or more of the offense categories in the table. Offenders may be counted in more than one offense category.

Sixty-two percent of all offenders had been arrested for at least one violent offense (i.e., an offense against a person) prior to committing the instant offense. Proportionally more death penalty offenders (72.5%) had a prior arrest for a violent offense than either life without parole (60.3%) or determinate (59.4%) offenders. Only 27% of all murderers previously had been arrested for a weapons offense, which were more characteristic of those who had received the sentence of life without parole.

More than 70% of all offenders had been arrested for least one offense against property. Previous property offenses were again more typical of offenders who received life without parole for murder. Twenty-nine percent of all offenders in the sample had been arrested for a controlled substance offense. Controlled substance offenses were most prevalent among determinate offenders and least prevalent among death penalty offenders.

Table 3-15: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Adjudications/Convictions

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Of the Offenders With a Criminal History Prior to Instant Offense						
Average Number of Adjudications						
Mean	2.6	2.9	2.9			
Standard Deviation	1.7	2.0	2.1			
Range	1-9	1-10	1-11			
Average Number of Criminal Convictions						
Mean	4.0	3.7	4.0			
Standard Deviation	3.9	3.1	4.3			
Range	1-23	1-17	1-18			
Average Total of Adjudications and Convictions						
Mean	4.8	4.6	5.1			
Standard Deviation	4.2	4.2	4.7			
Range	1-27	1-27	1-22			
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						
Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68% of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 2.6 and the standard deviation is 1.7, for 68% of all cases, the age at offense is between 0.9 and 4.3 juvenile adjudications.						

The average number of juvenile adjudications and criminal convictions and the distribution of adjudications and convictions prior to the instant offense did not vary much among offenders who had received a fixed-term, life without parole, or a death sentence for murder. On average, offenders had three previous juvenile adjudications and four previous criminal convictions as an adult regardless of sentence type. The number of prior adjudications and convictions ranged from one to 23. It should be noted, however, that these data may underestimate prior dispositions among study offenders because official criminal history ‘rap sheets’ were not available to the research team.

Table 3-16: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Correctional Supervision Status

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Offender Correctional Supervision Status Prior to Instant Offense						
Bail, Released on Own Recognizance, or Promise to Appear	67	24	21	22.5	32.9	23.1
Probation	66	8	14	22.1	11.0	15.4
Community-Based Sanction or Community Corrections Programs	10	3	6	3.4	4.1	6.6
Parole	19	4	7	6.4	5.5	7.7
Jail	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Prison	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1.1
Don't Know	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1.1

Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.

Twenty-four percent of all offenders were out on bail, released on their own recognizance, or had promised to appear for another offense when they committed the crime of murder. (Offenders may have been under more than one type of correctional supervision status). Life without parole offenders were 42% to 46% more likely than determinate and death penalty offenders to have been under this type of conditional release.

Nineteen percent of offenders were on probation for another offense and nearly 7% were on parole when the instant offense occurred. Twice as many determinate offenders than life with out parole offenders were on probation. Parole status when the murders occurred did not vary much by sentence type.

Table 3-17: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type –Transient or Homeless

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Was Offender Transient or Homeless Prior to Instant Offense?						
Yes	10	1	3	3.4	1.4	3.3
No	265	69	80	88.9	94.5	87.9
Other	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Don't Know	22	3	8	7.4	4.1	8.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Only 3% of all murderers in the study sample were known to be transient or homeless when the instant offense occurred. Slightly more offenders sentenced to life without parole had a stable residence than offenders in the other two sentence groups.

Table 3-18: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – Resident of Local Area

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Was the Offender a Local Resident Where the Instant Offense Occurred?						
Yes	257	56	68	86.2	76.7	74.7
No	32	15	17	10.7	20.5	18.7
Other	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Don't Know	8	2	6	2.7	2.7	6.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Eight-two percent of all offenders in the study lived in the same community where the murder took place. Determinately sentenced offenders were 12% to 15% more likely than life without parole and death penalty offenders to have lived in the area where the murder occurred.

Table 3-19: Offender Demographic Characteristics by Sentence Type – State of Residence

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
State of Residence Prior to Instant Offense						
Indiana	258	67	76	97.4	97.1	95.0
Illinois	2	0	2	0.8	0.0	2.5
Michigan	1	0	0	0.4	0.0	0.0
Ohio	4	0	2	1.5	0.0	2.5
Wyoming	0	2	0	0.0	2.9	0.0
Don't Know	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from official records and offender self-reports in Presentence Investigation Reports and intake documents completed upon entry into the Indiana Department of Correction.						

Ninety-seven percent of offenders who were not transient or homeless when the instant offense occurred were residents of Indiana.

SECTION 4: WHO IS MURDERED IN INDIANA?

Table 4-1: Victim Demographic Characteristics by Offender Sentence Type – Sex, Race & Age

	Number			Percent		
	Victims of Determinate Offenders	Victims of Life Without Parole Offenders	Victims of Death Penalty Offenders	Victims of Determinate Offenders	Victims of Life Without Parole Offenders	Victims of Death Penalty Offenders
Victim Sex						
Male	198	45	75	62.5	50.0	54.7
Female	118	45	62	37.2	50.0	45.3
Don't Know	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>317</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Victim Race / Ethnicity						
American Indian	1	0	1	0.3	0.0	0.7
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	2	1	0.0	2.2	0.7
Black/African American	132	10	18	41.6	11.1	13.1
Hispanic	5	3	3	1.6	3.3	2.2
White/Caucasian	169	67	114	53.3	74.4	83.2
Don't Know	10	8	0	3.2	8.9	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>317</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Victim Age at Death (in years)						
Mean	35.6	30.7	33.8			
Standard Deviation	19.2	20.2	21.4			
Range	0-93	0-78	0-83			

Source of Data: Information presented was collected either from offender Presentence Investigation Reports, offender intake materials collected by the Indiana Department of Correction, or death records maintained by the Indiana Department of Health.

Note(s): The standard deviation is a measure of how scores are dispersed around the mean. In a normal distribution, 68 of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean in either direction. Thus, assuming a normal distribution, if the mean age at offense is 35.6 and the standard deviation is 19.2, for 68 of all cases, the age at offense is between 16.4 and 54.8 years.

There are 544 victims of murder victims represented in this study. There were 317 victims of determinate offenders, 90 victims of life without parole offenders, and 137 victims of death penalty offenders. Fifty-nine percent of these victims were male and 41% were female. Victims of death penalty and life without parole offenders were roughly split 50-50 between male and female but nearly two-thirds of victims of determinate offenders were male.

Sixty-four percent of victims were Caucasian/White and 29% were African American/Black. White victims were the modal category (i.e., most frequently occurring) for each sentencing type group. However, while White victims were significantly more represented in both the life without parole and death penalty sentencing categories, they were less so in the determinate category. Fifty-three percent of victims of determinate offenders were White, while 42% were Black.

The youngest victim in the study was less than one year old, while the oldest was 93. There were slight differences in average victim age. The average age of victims of death penalty offenders was 33.8 years, victims of life without parole were 30.7 years of age, and victims of determinate offenders were on average 35.6 years old.

Table 4-2: Victim Demographic Characteristics by Offender Sentence Type – Marital Status & Education

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Victim Marital Status						
Married	60	25	23	19.0	27.8	16.8
Divorced	43	9	11	13.6	10.0	8.0
Widowed	23	7	9	7.3	7.8	6.6
Never Married	142	30	35	44.9	33.3	25.5
Don't Know	49	19	59	15.5	21.1	43.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Victim Highest Education Level Completed Prior to the Instant Offense						
Less Than 9 th Grade	28	10	12	8.9	11.1	8.8
9 th -12 th Grade Without High School Diploma or GED	57	13	6	18.0	14.4	4.4
High School Diploma or GED	135	21	29	42.7	23.3	21.2
Advanced Study	46	22	9	14.6	24.4	6.6
Don't Know	51	24	81	16.1	26.7	59.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented was collected either from offender Presentence Investigation Reports, offender intake materials collected by the Indiana Department of Correction, or death records maintained by the Indiana Department of Health.						

Before considering findings in Table 4-2, it is important to note that information about victims' marital status and highest education level achieved was difficult to find in offender case files or from secondary sources. In the extreme, marital status could not be identified for 43% of the victims of death penalty offenders.

For this table only, the following summary of findings is based on the number of victims *for whom marital status and highest education level were known*. Thus, unlike the overall proportions presented in Table 4-2, the summary is based on calculations in which values given for don't know were excluded. To do otherwise, skews the results and suggests relationships between these victim characteristics and sentence type that may not be true.

Twenty-six percent of murder victims in the study for whom marital status was known were married at the time they were killed; 50% had never been married. Proportionally more victims of life without parole offenders were married (35%) compared to victims of determinate (22%) and death penalty (29%) offenders.

Among those for whom education level was known, 65% to 68% of victims in all three sentence type groups had a high school diploma/GED or some level of advanced study. One-hundred and twenty six (33%) of all murder victims for whom education level was known had less than a high school diploma/GED, and 50 (13%) had less than a 9th grade education. Finally, it is interesting to note that offenders appeared to be somewhat less educated than their victims (slightly more than half of all offenders in the study had earned a high school diploma/GED or had advanced study, whereas two-thirds of victims in the study had done so).

Table 4-3: Victim Characteristics of the Crime by Offender Sentence Type – Level of Familiarity Between Victims and Offenders

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Relationship Between Victims and Offenders						
Acquaintance	107	32	40	31.8	31.1	26.8
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	15	2	2	4.5	1.9	1.3
Ex-Boyfriend/Ex-Girlfriend	10	2	2	3.0	1.9	1.3
Ex-Marital Relationship	1	1	3	0.3	1.0	2.0
Familial	30	14	19	8.9	13.6	12.8
Friend	26	6	6	7.7	5.8	4.0
Marital Relationship	16	2	5	4.8	1.9	3.4
Other	7	4	0	2.1	3.9	0.0
Stranger	46	28	57	13.7	27.2	38.3
Don't Know	78	12	15	23.2	11.7	10.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).

Note(s): Counts in this table reflect the unique combinations of relationships which exist among all offenders and all victims in the study. If two offenders committed the murder of one victim but had two different levels of familiarity with the victim, both types of relationships are counted here. Similarly, two victims murdered by the same offender may each have had different levels of familiarity with the offender; if so, both relationship types are tallied here.

By far more murders were characterized by an acquaintance relationship between victims and offenders than by familial, significant other, friend, or stranger relationships. The prevalence of acquaintance-murders did not vary greatly based on sentence type.

Relationships between determinate offenders and victims were one and a half times more likely to be marital relationships than was the case for life without parole offenders, and were 41% higher compared to the proportion of marital relationships noted among death penalty offenders. More determinate offenders also had boyfriend/girlfriend or ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend relationships with the victims of their crime, but this trend was just the opposite for the murder of an ex-spouse. This type of victim-offender relationship was more common among victims and death penalty offenders, followed by victims of offenders who received life without parole.

Murder of strangers was twice as prevalent among death penalty offenders compared to those who received a fixed-term, and 41% higher among death penalty offenders than life without parole offenders.

SECTION 5: WHERE DOES MURDER OCCUR IN INDIANA?

Table 5-1: Crime Characteristics by Offender Sentence Type – Location of Murder

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Location of Murder						
Residence of victim and offender or co-Offender	46	9	11	14.5	10.0	8.0
Victim's residence	88	37	58	27.8	41.1	42.3
Offender's residence	7	3	5	2.2	3.3	3.6
Other residence	34	8	9	10.7	8.9	6.6
Common area of apartment building/complex	4	1	0	1.3	1.1	0.0
Hotel, motel or other short-term residence	5	1	1	1.6	1.1	0.7
Victim's place of business or employment	2	6	10	0.6	6.7	7.3
Offender's place of business or employment	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Other place of business	2	2	1	0.6	2.2	0.7
Private vehicle of victim	21	1	7	6.6	1.1	5.1
Private vehicle of offender	5	0	1	1.6	0.0	0.7
Other vehicle	4	0	2	1.3	0.0	1.5
Convenience/grocery store (in gas station or not)	6	3	2	1.9	3.3	1.5
Bar or cocktail lounge or immediate vicinity	7	0	2	2.2	0.0	1.5
Liquor store	3	0	0	0.9	0.0	0.0
Other non-commercial public place	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	0.7
Street or sidewalk	40	9	4	12.6	10.0	2.9
Country road	0	0	2	0.0	0.0	1.5
Highway or freeway	0	1	1	0.0	1.1	0.7
Parking lot or vacant lot	7	1	3	2.2	1.1	2.2
Park or school grounds	2	0	0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Field or woods	12	3	10	3.8	3.3	7.3
Hospital	7	0	0	2.2	0.0	0.0
Jail, prison, or in the lawful custody of police or corrections	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	0.7
Other	5	1	3	1.6	1.1	2.2
Don't know	8	4	3	2.8	4.4	2.2
Total	317	90	137	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).

See table summary on page 34.

Table 5-1: One-third of all murder victims in the study were murdered in their own home. This is even more typical when the offender received a sentence of life without parole or death. Nearly a quarter of the remaining victims were murdered in a residence shared by the victim and offender or co-offender, the offender's residence, or another residence. The proportion of victims murdered in one of these three other locations was highest among determinate offenders (27%), followed by life without parole (20%) and death penalty (18%) offenders.

Ten percent of all murders took place on a street or sidewalk. This scenario was most common in determinate cases, occurring at a rate nearly three and a half times higher than the rate observed among death penalty offenders.

In only one instance did a murder take place at the offender's place of business or employment in contrast to 18 that occurred at the victim's place of business or employment.

Table 5-2: Crime Characteristics by Offender Sentence Type – Regions in State Where Offenders & Victims Lived and Where Murder Occurred

Region	Determinate						Life Without Parole						Death Penalty					
	Offender	Victim	Location	Offender	Victim	Location	Offender	Victim	Location	Offender	Victim	Location	Offender	Victim	Location	Offender	Victim	Location
	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Northern	112	124	139	43.9	46.1	44.0	24	32	35	35.8	40.5	38.9	28	39	57	37.8	38.2	41.6
Central	116	118	148	45.5	43.9	46.8	35	36	44	52.2	45.6	48.9	31	40	52	41.9	39.2	38.0
Southern	27	27	29	10.6	10.0	9.2	8	11	11	11.9	13.9	12.2	15	23	28	20.3	22.5	20.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).																		

Table 5.2 presents the number and proportion of murderers who lived in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Indiana (see Appendix), the number and proportion of murder victims who lived in each region, and the number and proportion of murders that took place in each location. The largest proportion of murders among determinate (46.8%) and life without parole (48.9%) offenders occurred in Central Indiana. The second most prevalent location of murders committed by determinate offenders (44%) and life without parole offenders (38.9%) was the Northern region of the state. This pattern was reversed among death penalty offenders—most of their murders occurred in Northern Indiana (41.6%) followed by murders committed in the Central part of the state (38.0%).

As noted earlier, the majority of offenders in this study were local residents of the area where the murder occurred (see Table 3-18). It is therefore not surprising that data in Table 5-2 reveal a close association between murder locations and where murderers lived. In contrast to the other two groups, most death penalty offenders were from Central Indiana but more committed their offense in the Northern part of the state. For the most part, the regional distribution of where victims lived closely paralleled the other two regional distributions—most victims lived in the region where the murder occurred and where the offender lived.

SECTION 6: HOW IS MURDER COMMITTED IN INDIANA?

Table 6-1: Crime Characteristics by Offender Sentence Type – Method of Entry

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Entry Method						
Entry with permission	142	44	57	44.8	48.9	41.6
Permission to enter not required (e.g., outside or a public establishment)	108	22	37	34.1	24.4	27.0
Uninvited but not forced (open door, window)	15	7	9	4.7	7.8	6.6
Forced entry	28	7	19	8.8	7.8	13.9
Don't know	23	10	15	7.6	11.1	10.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>317</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).						
Notes(s): A method of entry or the means by which offenders gained access to their victims was recorded for each victim in the study. Table 6.1 presents the method of entry associated with each of the 544 victims in the study by offender sentence type.						

Regardless of offender sentence type, most victims (45%) were assaulted in situations in which offenders 'entered with permission.' Entry with permission included situations in which the offender would ordinarily be free to come and go. In many cases, murders occurred in places where permission to enter was not required such as outside or in a public establishment (offenders gained access to a third of all victims in this way). Forced entry was used to gain access to 14% of victims of death penalty offenders, but only 8% of the victims of offenders in the other two sentence type groups.

Table 6.2: The most common means by which victims were killed were handguns, shotguns, or other firearms. A firearm (alone or in combination with another means) was used to murder 53% of all victims in the study. This method was most commonly used by determinate offenders—58% of their victims were murdered this way, compared to 37% of victims killed by life without parole offenders and 50% of victims of death penalty offenders.

Twenty-two percent of all victims were assaulted with a knife (this method was somewhat more common among life without parole and death penalty offenders).

Beating/hitting with hands and/or feet; strangling by hand; and strangling with rope or a garrote were used in the murder of nearly 14% of all victims. Twelve percent of the victims of determinate and life offenders were murdered this way, compared to 17% of the victims murdered by death penalty offenders.

Table 6-2: Characteristics of the Crime by Offender Sentence Type – Murder Weapon Used

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Murder Weapon Used						
Handgun	155	31	54	48.9	34.4	39.4
Shotgun	28	2	14	8.8	2.2	10.2
Other firearm	2	0	0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Assault rifle (e.g., AK47, Tech 9, Uzi)	3	2	8	0.9	2.2	5.8
Other rifle	10	1	4	3.2	1.1	2.9
Knife	48	28	44	15.1	31.1	32.1
Ax	0	1	0	0.0	1.1	0.0
Other sharp instrument (e.g., ice pick or piece of metal)	5	3	1	1.6	3.3	0.7
Instrument of blunt trauma (e.g., sledge hammer, pipe, baseball bat, tire iron, concrete block, bottle)	27	9	12	8.5	10.0	8.8
Beating/hitting with hands and/or feet	15	1	4	4.7	1.1	2.9
Strangled with hands	17	5	7	5.4	5.6	5.1
Strangled with rope, other material, or used a garrote	8	5	12	2.5	5.6	8.8
Smothering or suffocation device (e.g., pillow, bag)	5	2	2	1.6	2.2	1.5
Water or other liquid (i.e., drowning)	0	2	3	0.0	2.2	2.2
Fire, hot substance, or acid	6	6	4	1.9	6.7	2.9
Drugs/narcotics	6	0	0	1.9	0.0	0.0
Automobile	1	0	0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Other (e.g., toy, toilet plunger, dehydration)	16	3	8	5.0	3.3	5.8
Don't know	14	5	1	4.4	5.6	0.7

Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).

Notes(s): The weapon or the means by which victims were killed was recorded for each victim in the study. Table 6.2 presents the murder weapon associated with each of the 544 victims in the study by offender sentence type. In some cases, more than one weapon was used to kill an individual victim. Thus, for any given cell, percentages were obtained by dividing the cell number by the number of victims murdered by determinate (317 victims), life without parole (90 victims), and death penalty (137 victims) offenders.

See table summary on page 36.

SECTION 7: WHY DOES MURDER OCCUR IN INDIANA?

Table 7-1: Characteristics of the Crime by Offender Sentence Type – Motives of Offenders

	Number			Percent		
	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders	Determinate Offenders	Life Without Parole Offenders	Death Penalty Offenders
Motives of Offenders						
To facilitate the commission of another crime (e.g., kidnapping, robbery, rape)	106	40	54	35.6	54.8	59.3
Over an intimate or familial situation	82	12	15	27.5	16.4	16.5
Over a non-intimate or non-familial situation	42	0	2	14.1	0.0	2.2
To collect on a drug debt/to support a drug habit	41	5	3	13.8	6.8	3.3
For non-drug-related monetary/property gain	90	25	42	30.2	34.2	46.2
To demonstrate physical or psychological power/control	10	9	11	3.4	12.3	12.1
Desire for sexual gratification	10	12	14	3.4	16.4	15.4
Sexual rivalry (e.g., jealousy)	27	4	1	9.1	5.5	1.1
Hatred, retaliation, animosity, or revenge	58	16	11	19.5	21.9	12.1
To silence a person who witnessed the defendant or codefendant during the commission of a crime	28	28	39	9.4	38.4	42.9
To escape apprehension, trial, punishment, or confinement for a prior offense committed by the defendant or another (e.g., to avoid questioning by a law enforcement officer or while resisting arrest)	7	3	10	2.3	4.1	11.0
For the role played by a present or former law enforcement officer, judicial officer, prosecutor, or lawyer in the exercise of his/her duty	1	4	8	0.3	5.5	8.8

Source of Data: Information presented came from various official records (e.g., Presentence Investigation Reports, arrest reports, and affidavits of probable cause).

Notes(s): The reason or motive underlying each offender's decision to kill was recorded for each offender in the study. Table 7.1 presents the motives associated with each of the 462 offenders in the study by offender sentence type. In some cases, more than one motive was associated with the crime. Thus, for any given cell, percentages were obtained by dividing the cell number by the number of determinate (298), life without parole (73), and death penalty (91) offenders.

See table summary on page 39.

Table 7-1: The top five reasons for murders committed by offenders in this study were: To facilitate the commission of another crime (i.e., 'felony murder,' 43% of all offenders); to acquire money or property (non-drug-related; 34% of all offenders); over an intimate or familial situation (24% of all offenders); to silence someone who witnessed the defendant or a codefendant during the commission of a crime (21% of all offenders); and hatred, retaliation, animosity, or revenge (16% of all offenders).

Felony murder, one of the aggravating elements for enhanced murder sentences in Indiana, was significantly more common among life without parole and death penalty offenders. This also was the case when murders were committed to acquire non-drug-related money or property. Murdering someone to silence them because they had witnessed another crime was common among death and life offenders but was not at all prevalent among offenders who received a fixed-term.

Committing murder over an intimate or familial situation was far more characteristic of determinate offenders than offenders in either of the other two sentence type groups. Hatred animosity and revenge as a motive for murder was associated with both determinate and life without parole offenders, but not nearly as much so for those who received a sentence of death.

SECTION 8: SUMMARY

The Social Ecology of Murder in Indiana is the first in a series of reports from *Indiana's Murder Sentencing Study*. Indiana's murder study represents the first, comprehensive, predictive study of murder and sentences received for murder in Indiana. Data were collected for all individuals who have been given a death sentence since Indiana reinstated the death penalty in 1977, all individuals sentenced to life in prison without parole since this option was added to Indiana's criminal code in 1993, and a random sample of individuals who committed murder and were sentenced to a determinate, fixed-term between July 1, 1990 and December 31, 2002.

Indiana's study gathered hundreds of variables on hundreds of people convicted of murder in the state, and the many victims of their crimes. Detailed facts about the crime, trial, conviction, and sentencing also were obtained. Before complex multivariate analyses are published it is important to first provide a basic, in-depth description of the study population, their victims, and the contexts in which the murders occurred—which is the purpose of this paper—*The Social Ecology of Murder in Indiana*. To the best of our knowledge, this report is the first time an attempt has ever been made to explain the who, where, how, and why of murder in the state.

The next major report from the research team that designed and developed *Indiana's Murder Sentencing Study* will focus on sentencing outcomes for murder in Indiana to help identify which legal factors, extralegal factors, or any combination thereof determine the sentence received. Cases which are similar in terms of the offender's culpability and the aggravating and mitigating circumstances characterizing the crime should equivalently result in one of the three graduated sentences imposed for murder in Indiana—a determinate or "fixed-term," life without the possibility of parole, or the death penalty. When legally relevant factors that may legitimately influence sentencing outcomes are controlled, legally irrelevant factors such as the race of the defendant and the race of the victim should not disparately be related to sentencing outcomes for murder or any other crime.

Additional forthcoming publications include detailed consideration of: (a) felony murder, (b) women who kill, (c) murder among intimates, (d) murder and the mentally ill, and (e) the relationship between drugs, alcohol, and murder in our state.

SECTION 9: REFERENCES

Janeway, K. (Reporter). (2002). *The Application of Indiana's Capital Sentencing Law: Findings of the Indiana Criminal Law Study Commission*. [Available online at www.in.gov/cji or from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, One North Capitol, Suite 1000, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2038]

Ziemba-Davis, M., Myers, B.L., Lisby, K.J. (2002). Sentencing Outcomes for Murder in Indiana: Initial Findings. In *The Application of Indiana's Capital Sentencing Law: Findings of the Indiana Criminal Law Study Commission* (pp. 123A-123Q). [Available online at www.in.gov/cji or from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, One North Capitol, Suite 1000, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2038]

SECTION 10: APPENDIX

Counties comprising the Northern, Central, and Southern Regions of Indiana as presented in Table 5-2 are as follows:

Northern Region: Adams, Allen, Benton, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Dekalb, Elkhart, Fulton, Grant, Howard, Huntington, Jasper, Jay, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Miami, Newton, Noble, Porter, Pulaski, St. Joseph, Starke, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, White, and Whitley.

Central Region: Bartholomew, Boone, Brown, Clay, Clinton, Decatur, Delaware, Fayette, Fountain, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Henry, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Owen, Parke, Putnam, Randolph, Rush, Shelby, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Union, Vermillion, Vigo, Warren, and Wayne.

Southern Region: Clark, Crawford, Daviess, Dearborn, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Knox, Lawrence, Martin, Ohio, Orange, Perry, Pike, Posey, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Washington.